

Message Text

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ACTION NSF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0679

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FOR NSF

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: TGEN AS US

SUBJ: EXTENSION OF US- AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE AGREEMENT

1. SUMMARY: US- AUSTRALIA SCIENCE AGREEMENT DUE TO EXPIRE NEXT OCTOBER UNLESS TWO GOVERNMENTS ACT TO EXTEND IT. AGREEMENT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY USEFUL IN EXPANDING SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION. PROSPECTS GOOD THAT AGREEMENT WILL BECOME EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT IN FUTURE AND THAT GOA WILL SUPPORT EXTENSION, ALTHOUGH QUESTION NOT YET CONSIDERED BY SCIENCE MINISTER. EMBASSY SUPPORTS EXTENSION AND RECOMMENDS DEPARTMENT AND NSF CONSIDER MATTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. END SUMMARY

2. US- AUSTRALIA AGREEMENT FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION SIGNED OCTOBER 16, 1968, IN CANBERRA, WILL EXPIRE NEXT OCTOBER UNLESS USG AND GOA ACT TO EXTEND IT. DESPITE RATHER SLOW START, AGREEMENT HAS INCREASINGLY BECOME HIGHLY USEFUL MACHANISM FOR EXPANDING US- AUSTRALIAN COOPERATION AND JOINT EFFORTS IN BROAD RANGE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL FIELD. PROGRESS HAS RECENTLY BEEN MADE ON AUSTRALIAN SIDE TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN AND APPRECIATION OF AGREEMENT' S USEFULNESS. DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE
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(DES) HAS LATELY ARRANGED WITH FEDERAL TREASURY FOR CONTINGENCY FUND TO EXPEDITE GOA APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF FUTURE PROJECTS. NEW LABOR GOA ELECTED DECEMBER 1972 IS PLEDGED TO GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SCIENCE POLICY AND LARGER AUSTRALIAN ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS. DES EFFORTS TO INCREASE SCIENCE COMMUNITY' S AWARENESS OF AND INTEREST IN UTILIZING AGREEMENT HAVE BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY HELPED BY RECENT THREE WEEK VISIT OF NSF' S DR. MAX HELLMANN AND WIDE PUBLICITY GIVEN ERTS PROGRAM, ALPHA HELIX RESEARCH VESSEL, AND OTHER HIGH INTEREST PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER AGREEMENT. DES PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN INCREASING NUMBER AND SCOPE BINATIONAL SEMINARS. INTEREST ALSO WIDESPREAD IN INCREASED US- AUSTRALIAN COOPERATION IN MARINE SCIENCES. IN SHORT, AGREEMENT APPEARS TO BE GATHERING MOMENTUM AND SUPPORT JUST AT TIME DECISION ON EXTENSION MUST BE MADE.

3. EMBASSY SCIENCE LIAISON OFFICER HAS INFORMALLY SOUNDED OUT DES OFFICIALS ON GOA ATTITUDE TOWARD EXTENSION. MATTER HAS NOT YET BEEN PUT BEFORE SCIENCE MINISTER MORRISON, BUT DES PERMANENT HEAD ENNOR FAVORS EXTENSION " IN PRINCIPLE." IN LIGHT LABOR PARTY COMMITMENT TO MORE ACTIVE DOMESTIC SCIENCE POLICY AND INCREASED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, CHANCES ARE VERY GOOD THAT MORRISON WILL RECOMMEND TO CABINET THAT AGREEMENT BE EXTENDED. GOA MAY ALSO DECIDE TO SEEK SIMILAR AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES SINCE US AGREEMENT TO DATE IS AUSTRALIA' S FIRST AND ONLY.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY SUPPORTS AGREEMENT EXTENSION AND RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT AND NSF CONSIDER MATTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO REACH EARLY DECISION. MEANWHILE, DES OFFICIALS WILL RAISE MATTER WITH GOA TO ESTABLISH AUSTRALIAN POSITION RE EXTENSION.
RICE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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